WEB GUIDEBOOKS

1 2 3

Book One
Planning Guide
Web Redesign and Redevelopment

Detailed explanations of each planning phase including tools, tips and techniques you can use along the way

Contact Web Communications with feedback or questions at webcomm@sc.edu
Book One
Planning Guide
Web Redesign and Redevelopment

This planning guide is the first book in a series of three that will guide you through the redesign and redevelopment of your website. The planning guide helps you think through your content, structure, audience and goals. The style guide introduces the page designs and content modules you’ll use to bring your planning to life as a website. And the training guide will teach you how to use the content management system to build the site you planned.
Web Redesign: The “front end”

The redesign effort will work to bring the entire ecosystem of sc.edu websites under one unified and cohesive look that supports our brand and lets everyone know, from the moment any page is displayed, that the page is part of the University of South Carolina’s website. This portion of the project, which focuses on the Web user and what they see and interact with in their browser, is referred to as the “front end” of the website.

Web Communications will consult with you on the front end to plan, conceive and design the experience you want people to have when they visit your site.

Web Redevelopment: The “back end”

The redevelopment portion of the project will strive to implement all of our websites through one content management system (CMS). The CMS will allow you to use all of our consistent brand and visual elements along with your specific content to build Web pages and sites. The CMS will allow you and content contributors from your areas to create and curate content on your website through an easy to use browser-based, self-service interface.

Our CMS, from OmniUpdate, any databases you may have and other systems that are the technological underpinnings of your website are referred to as the “back end” of your website. University Technology Services (UTS) will work with you on the back end to get your unit set up and trained on the CMS.

As you navigate through the redesign phases in this book look for these markers for more information, details or helpful hints.

This marker indicates a point in the process when you and your team of stakeholders should check in with Web Communications.
PHASE 1
Engage:
Working with Web Communications

The Web Communications team understands that you are no doubt anxious to use the CMS and visual identity elements to build your website.

But, before you can begin to build your website in the CMS, you will need to go through several exercises to:
• evaluate the current state of your website
• define and prioritize your audiences so you aren’t trying to be all things to all people
• categorize and organize your website so that it is intuitive and easy for the audiences you identified to find what they need
• use the modular elements of the design to build pages that accomplish the goals you establish for your site.

You can see there is quite a bit to do before you’ll be ready to “begin.”

This planning guide will help you with the redesign of your site through a series of phases. Throughout the process you will be expected to check in with Web Communications for a review to ensure you don’t start a new activity based on an incomplete or inaccurate prior phase and for a preview of the next phase. The final check-in will include a quality control review prior to launch for consistency across all websites.

Evaluating Resources:
The equipped, the ill-equipped and everything in between

For units that have both information technology resources and content resources, once you’ve completed the initial phases of the redesign process and have been set up and trained by UTS on the OmniUpdate CMS, you’ll be ready to get in and start building your website.

Those that have limited in-house resources can talk to Web Communications about contracting with companies and individuals on the approved vendor list who have been trained and who have agreed to bill at a flat, hourly rate of $75. Those units that have neither the in-house resources nor the ability to pay an outside vendor will be helped by Web Communications and UTS as staffing allows.
PHASE 1

**Assemble:** Forming your team

Only for the smallest of units will one person alone be able to manage the task of planning and building a website. For everyone else, a successful project is predicated on the selection of a small team of key stakeholders and reliable work group for your unit.

Your stakeholders are not necessarily the people who will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of your site, rather they need to be the people who will give approvals at various stages of the redesign. Your stakeholders will be the ones who set the tone and define the overall goals they want the website to achieve.

Your work group should have a strategic-minded leader who has the resolve to keep everyone focused on the vision of the stakeholders, the guiding principles of the project and goals of the website as much as on the production schedule. In many instances, this project leader will be the marketing communications person for the unit and will function as the single point of contact between the unit, Web Communications and UTS. In other cases, the leader will be the information technology person for the unit. In either case, having a content-minded, strategic thinker and a technology-minded person both serving on the work group is important.

The team should meet with Web Communications at all check-ins.

**Stakeholders:**
A small group of decision-makers who will define the goals of the website and reconcile competing priorities.
PHASE 1

**Evaluate:**
Assessing content and structure

The first phase of your redesign starts with a close look at the content and structure of your current website. You’ll want to ask yourself some questions about your content. Keep in mind that your current site probably features content targeted at both internal and external audiences that you serve. As part of your redesign, you will be trying to separate externally focused content from internally focused content as much as possible.

**External audience:**
Anyone outside the USC campus, including alumni, donors, the Columbia community and primarily (in most cases) prospective students and their parents.

**Exercise**

**Navigate through your current website and ask yourself:**

- What content here might matter externally?
- What content might matter to mostly internal audiences?
- What content is on the site not because of a primary audience need but because of a funding, governing or auditing requirement?
- What content doesn’t matter? (Be ruthless!)
- What content is important but needs to be updated, corrected or edited?
- Who in your organization should curate which content? This person will be responsible for periodically auditing the content and editing it to keep it accurate and relevant. The tools make it easy, but they don’t do the thinking!
Create a content inventory

With your content questions in mind, you will want to create a spreadsheet that inventories all of the content on your site and that you link to, where the content or the links live on your site, who the subject matter expert responsible for each piece of content is, who the audience is, etc. and give it a rating. Your rating may be a categorization (for example: outdated, redundant, highest importance) or number/letter grade, whatever helps you understand where things stand with the content on your site.

If your website reflects the organizational structure of your area, you will want to do some preliminary thinking about organizing it in a different way that requires no prior knowledge of your area to find information. You can add a column to your spreadsheet with a notation that will let you re-sort the content based on your initial thoughts for reorganization.

Your content inventory might include:

- **Content ID** – Use a cascading number system to reflect site hierarchy (100.1.1 = Section.Subsection.Page).
- **Page title** – This is what displays in the header of your browser window when viewing. If these are the same on every page, assign a descriptive title.
- **Page URL** – The Web address of a page.
- **Page category** – Indicates the section of the site the page is in or the type of page. (This might be captured sufficiently in your numbering system.)
- **Tags/keywords** – Labels what the content is about or who it is written for. Try to keep a limited number of tags/keywords.
- **Description of content** – Concise, meaningful summary.
- **Copy status** – This field won’t be used until you start rewriting content.
- **Related content** – Indicates a photo/video/download/website that is related to this content.
- **Content author** – Identifies the writer or compiler of the content.
- **Subject matter expert** – Person responsible for verifying and maintaining accuracy and relevance.
- **Content curator** – Think of this person as the overall page editor.
- **Creation date**
- **Source** – Identifies the person or area that is the primary source for information (e.g. the professor interviewed for the article).
- **Quality** – Helps determine if the page stays as is, needs updating or gets deleted.

Download a sample content inventory

[sc.edu/toolbox/downloads/content_inventory.xlsx](sc.edu/toolbox/downloads/content_inventory.xlsx)
## Content Inventory

This content inventory numbers each page, including page title (done in an outline indented format), the page URL, information on what is actually on the page and what steps should be taken to update or fix problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Title</th>
<th>URL</th>
<th>What's there</th>
<th>Next action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President's Home Page</td>
<td><a href="http://president.sc.edu/">URL</a></td>
<td>Outdated info, almost outdated sidebars</td>
<td>Check with Duc Terrio about updating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President's Office</td>
<td><a href="http://president.sc.edu/">URL</a></td>
<td>Link to Carolina feature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Labs: From the Top</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/postlabs/forum/10/1/2005_10.html">URL</a></td>
<td>USC Mission Statement</td>
<td>Frame from Home Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Operations</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/flyoperations/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Info plus links</td>
<td>Frame from Home Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Info</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/flyoperations/flyoperations_infor.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Info plus links</td>
<td>Frame from Home Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservation Form</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/flyoperations/reservation_requests/reservation_form_for_submission.html">URL</a></td>
<td>Info plus links</td>
<td>Frame from Home Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Schedules</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/flyoperations/flyoperations_schedule.html">URL</a></td>
<td>Info plus links</td>
<td>Frame from Home Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC Airport Information</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/flyoperations/flyoperations_dca.html">URL</a></td>
<td>Info plus links</td>
<td>Frame from Home Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens Field Information</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/flyoperations/flyoperations_ows.html">URL</a></td>
<td>Info plus links</td>
<td>Frame from Home Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President/HIst Lady Bio</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/president/presidentinfo.html">URL</a></td>
<td>Bio</td>
<td>Frame from Home Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna Passmore Bio</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/president/presidentinfo.html">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Moore-Pasmore</td>
<td><a href="http://president.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Revival</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriot's Gallery</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking for a Healthy Life</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recre</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community involvement</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus and Around</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the Board</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriots' Gallery</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements and Speeches</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos and Videos</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support South Carolina</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sc.edu/Powerpoint/index.php">URL</a></td>
<td>Welcome message</td>
<td>Breakout box</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This inventory includes keywords, who is responsible for maintaining the content and its status.

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**University of South Carolina** Web Redesign and Redevelopment

**Book 1** Planning Guide  
**Book 2** Style Guide  
**Book 3** Training Guide
Contact Web Communications

Review:
• content inventory for completeness
• decisions made about focus and quality of existing content

Preview:
• Google Analytics
• heuristic analysis

Questions?
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.
PHASE 2

**Analyze:**
Using Web analytics

Analytics are your friend. They can help you understand what people value on your site, which many times differs from what your internal stakeholders will insist the audience values.

You may or may not have Web analytics running on your current site. If you do, it can help you uncover insights in the way people use your current site, what content they value and what content they either ignore or can't find. If you don’t currently have Web analytics software, Google offers a very good tool for free at [http://www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics).

The new Web templates are going to support two Google Analytics account numbers for every page. One for Web Communications to see how traffic moves over the entire sc.edu domain and one so that you can run your own reports for your site. Be sure to record your Google Analytics account number so that you can share it with UTS when they set up your site on the CMS.

**Set up and review your Web analytics**

When you run or request your analytics reports make sure you are capturing, at a minimum:

- The number of visitors/unique visitors
- Time on page/site
- Bounce and exit rates
- Inbound links to individual pages
- Most shared content
- Best performing keywords and associated pages
- Downloads
- Offline analytics such as how many emails are generated or forms are submitted

This is a screen shot of a Google Analytics dashboard showing the basic metrics you should be analyzing.

**Google Analytics**
[http://www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics)
PHASE 2

Compare:
Taking the heuristic approach

A heuristic is simply a rule of thumb. A heuristics evaluation is a technique that rates your website against generally accepted best practices for usability, engagement, accessibility and information design. It will be helpful for you to ask yourself a few questions as you look through your site and then, for perspective, look at other sites through the same lens. They could be sites you enjoy visiting, they could be sites that you compete with for students or sites of those that are recognized leaders in certain areas.

Many of the design and usability considerations for your new website will be addressed in the branded page designs and content modules available to you in the CMS. But because you will be responsible for creating the content on your website, you can evaluate your current site to identify areas you may need to improve via the redesign.

Ask yourself:
- Is there a clear purpose to your overall website and to individual pages? Is that purpose carried out over the entirety of the site?
- Are there any acronyms that aren’t explained? Remember you’re trying to appeal to external audiences.
- Are the images high quality and professional or do they look more like snapshots?
- Are the images thoughtfully cropped for interest?
- Do all of the links you provide link to quality, up-to-date websites or documents?
- Are there any spelling or grammatical errors? Run on sentences? Sentence fragments?
- Are your navigation links clearly, concisely and consistently labeled? Remember the structure of your site, reflected by your navigation, should be intuitive to an outsider with limited understanding of who you are, what you do and what makes you special.
- Do all of the images on my site have ALT tags? The ALT tag provides a description of an image for visually impaired visitors to your site.
- Perhaps most importantly, is it evident that a thoughtful attempt was made to present your content in an interesting and engaging way? Or does it look like you’ve dumped everything anyone could think of onto the site with the goal of completeness at a cost of findability, usability and engagement?
Contact Web Communications

Review:
• analytics reports:
  • most visited pages
  • referring sites
  • where traffic originates
• conclusions from heuristic evaluation:
  what needs to improve?

Preview:
• guiding principles
• team composition
• group exercises

Questions?
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.
**PHASE 3**

**Focus:**
Understanding the guiding principles

In order to deliver a marketing tool that strengthens the University of South Carolina’s brand and promotes its academic, research and service initiatives, a small but important list of principles is **guiding the redesign effort**. Being aware of these guiding principles should help you move through the process of creating a new website for your area.

**Based on best practices and guided by research, the new design strives to:**

**Reinforce the university brand:** The Web design presents a strong sense of identity that goes beyond the singularities of the logo and the garnet and black color palette. Regardless of the page of entry, there should be no mistake that a website visitor has landed at the University of South Carolina.

Strive for similar consistency in the way you present the brand of your area. Everything from the photos to the text to the voice and tone you write with impact the way your brand is perceived by your website visitors.

**Deliver a user-centered design:** A major challenge for sites the size of sc.edu is providing meaningful navigation for users with no knowledge of the university or its organizational structure.

Taking an outside-in look at your website through the eyes of your primary and secondary audiences will help you align their needs with your goals.

**Balance engaging content with ease of maintenance:** In conjunction with its CMS underpinnings, the design must strike a balance of elegance, engaging interaction and ease of maintenance by content managers ranging from novice to expert.

As you create your website, you should strive for a similar balance and understand that you will need to curate your content on a regular basis – editing, adding and eliminating content as necessary.

**Be viewable on screens of any size:** Responsive design is an emerging practice that allows a website to rearrange and resize itself depending on the size of the screen it is being viewed on, ensuring that whether the user is on a desktop computer, a tablet or phone, the site will be useful and usable.

Recognize that the content you create will look different depending on how the visitor is browsing your site. Take care to look at your site on different devices to get a feel for how the content shifts. Once you familiarize yourself with how the layout shifts to accommodate different screens, you’ll see it shifts in a predictable way.

**Be clear. Be consistent. Be concise.** Demonstrate that less is more. Strive for less quantity and more quality. Rather than putting the burden on your audience to find the information they are looking for, help them out by parsing the volume of information you have into the essentials and then lead them to more detailed information if they desire it. Site visitors don’t mind clicking if they feel they are getting closer to the information they want.

**exercise**

**What are the guiding principles, specific to your area, that you need to add to this list?** Think about the goals you have for your website that you will want to stay focused on as you move through this process.
PHASE 3
Establish: Setting your content strategy goals

By now you should have a pretty clear picture of your website as it currently exists. Thanks to your inventory, you know what content has been languishing without update for a period of time. Thanks to your analytics evaluation, you know what content visitors are coming to your website for and thanks to your heuristic evaluation, you should have an idea of how you can do some things better.

Understanding your current site is important. But remember, we’re going to focus our redesigned sites on external audiences. You don’t want to simply replicate your old website with a fresh look and updated content, you want to rethink it. Take what you’ve learned up to this point and set goals for what you want your new site to accomplish.

A small team of key stakeholders from your area should set these goals. These stakeholders are the people who are going to be giving approvals at various stages of the redesign, so naturally they should be the ones who set the tone and define the overall goals they want the website to achieve.

Make sure that your goals are SMART—Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Time-based. For example, one goal might be that you want to increase by 15 percent the number of prospective students contacting you from the website by the next application deadline. Not all goals can be that specific, but if you create as many as possible in this manner, you will be able to objectively measure how your site performs after launch and see exactly where you need to take action.

You will want to try to keep things as objective as possible. Having agreement on what you want the site to accomplish before you begin creating it is one of the best ways to do that. Undoubtedly, you will need to remind your stakeholders of your goals and guiding principles when commentary becomes subjective. One of the basic tenets of Web design is to remind stakeholders, “You are not your user!”

A good goal to start with is to emphasize your unique value proposition: What is the thing you do, as good as or better than anyone else, that satisfies a need that your audience has? You can call this your sales pitch, but the goal is to highlight that one thing that differentiates you.

Once you define the goals for your site, determine what types of content you’re going to need to support those goals. Refer to your content inventory to see how you may be addressing some goals now. In the goal example seeking to increase the number of prospective students contacting us, a basic, well-labeled “contact us” form would be an appropriate piece of content.

At this point, it isn’t important to know the details of the content. Instead, focus on broad content areas that strategically address your goals. Next, you’ll define your audiences and their desired goals and then you will get into the specifics of content. For now, it’s enough to list what types of content will further your goals for the website.
Contact Web Communications

Review:
• site goals
• content areas

Preview:
• defining and prioritizing audiences
• user goals

Questions?
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.
PHASE 4
Define: Understanding your audience

The first thing to consider before you think about how to organize your website is who you are building it for. Many of you are going to say, “Everyone!” and it probably feels that way, but a successful website cannot be all things to all people. To avoid falling into that trap, you need to undertake an exercise with your stakeholders to establish and define your primary and secondary audiences.

In your survey, ask your audience:
• What do they want to accomplish by visiting the website?
• What information do they seek?
• What impression of your organization would they like to have after visiting the site?
• What do they like about the existing site?
• Where does the existing site fall short?
• Is there anything frustrating about navigating the site?
• Is the content written in an easy to understand way?
• Is there the right amount of information? Too general? Too detailed?

From all of this feedback, create user profile cards.

Exercise

Ask your stakeholders to think about the goals they’ve already established for your website and to list all of the audiences that need to be communicated with to reach those goals. After capturing all the potential audiences, have the stakeholders rank them. Your primary audience will be the main focus of your site, and while your secondary audiences are important, they are not critical.

Once you have listed and ranked the audiences that will be using your site, create a list of activities that each audience will expect from the site. Try to be thorough when listing these activities, called user goals, but keep your list concise. Again, you do not want to try to be all things to all people. You want to support the top activities of your most valued audiences, understanding that each section, each page, each feature will not necessarily play to every audience.

If you think back to the guiding principles, we want to make sure we are taking a user-centric, outside-in look at what our website should be. The ultimate goal is to arrange your site so that it anticipates your users’ needs and their expectations. It is important to validate and augment the user goals that your stakeholders came up with by soliciting feedback from actual users. You can accomplish this by placing a survey on your website, or by interviewing people who are representative of your target audiences. Record who each user is, what audience they are a part of, how they access your website (desktop, laptop, tablet, phone, Mac, PC, Droid, etc.).
This survey conducted by the School of Music asked about audience and familiarity at the outset.
**Contact Web Communications**

**Review:**
- audience prioritization
- draft survey
- user goals

**Preview:**
- aligning site and user goals

**Questions?**
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.
**PHASE 5**

**Organize:**
Using information architecture tools

Information architecture (IA) is all about organization. It covers how to **structure** a website so things are easy to find, how to **label** things so they are intuitive to those unfamiliar with you and how to **present** information in a way that is easy to scan at a high level and easy to drill down into for more detail. Good architecture organizes information in a **consistent and predictable** way across your entire site and on each page, helping to make the experience of using your website more coherent, intuitive and satisfying.

Through the process of defining your information architecture, you will create a site map to help visualize the organization of your site and wireframes to help visualize the organization of specific pages.

Thinking through the information architecture before you start putting your site together lets you encounter issues when you have lots of options to address them, as opposed to running into the problem once you’re already well into creating the site and have limited options.

**Site map:**
A visual representation of all of the content on the site.

**Wireframe:**
A visual representation of the content on a single page or page type.
You should now have an understanding of who your website is for and what these people will expect to do on your site. Before you start the process of creating the content, you need to add one more element into the mix to get a full picture of what you will need to deliver. You need to match your website goals and the high-level content areas (described in the content strategy section above) to the goals of your primary and secondary audiences.

**Exercise:**

**Create a complete list of content areas that align site and user goals:**

Gather your stakeholders’ around a whiteboard.

1. List out and rank the site goals that the stakeholders created.
2. List the target audiences in order of importance.
3. Let each stakeholder choose one user profile card to represent. (All users need to be represented by at least one person.)
4. Go around the room and ask each person to share questions that their user would likely ask when visiting the site. You may need to combine or reword questions slightly as additional, similar questions are asked. Try not to duplicate questions.
5. Check off the site goals as user goals are recorded that align with them. If any site goals go unchecked, you may need to add corresponding user goals.
6. As a group, remove the questions that are not practical or that are outside the scope of your project.
7. Translate the questions into short phrases. For example, “What degrees do you offer?” becomes “degrees.” “Are there scholarships available for graduate students?” becomes “graduate scholarships.”

You now have a comprehensive list of content areas.

**Define:**

**Site goal:**
A goal that stakeholders feel a website should accomplish for an organization.

**User goal:**
A goal or expectation that a website user has when visiting a site.
Contact Web Communications

Review:
• aligned site and user goals

Preview:
• card sorting exercise

Questions?
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.
Card sorting is an information architecture technique we use to understand how target audiences might organize and label information from their perspective. Participants sort a series of cards into groups that make sense to them, and give each group a label. Ideally, some representative users from your primary audience, will place your content into meaningful groupings by using this exercise. You can also use card sorting software to make this easier.

**Exercise**

**Card Sorting**

1. Write each content item or type from the previous exercise on a sticky note — one per note.
2. Sort the sticky notes into groupings that make sense.
3. If the sorter feels a particular content item could fit in more than one group, put it where they would most likely look for it and note the other groupings it fits in as well. (Later in the process, the item will live in the main group and you will link to it from the other groupings you noted.)
4. Once you are done sorting, name your groupings with one or two words that clearly describe the items in the group.
5. If you have items that could or should go on every page, like “contacts” or “directions,” put them in a group labeled “global.”
6. You may find some subject areas are general while others are very specific. At this point, you can combine similar specific subjects to form subcategories under a broader subject category. For example, you might combine “undergraduate programs” and “postgraduate programs” under the broader heading of “areas of study.”

**Tools**

- Download xSort (Mac)
  http://www.xsortapp.com

- Download uxSort (PC)
  http://www.uxsort.com
Check-in

Contact Web Communications

Review:
• card sorting exercise

Preview:
• visual representations of your website
• introduction of style guide

Questions?
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.

Tools

Style Guide
The Style Guide, the second book in the series, introduces the page designs and content modules that have been created for the redesign project. Project teams will learn from this guide how to give a visual representation to the website they planned with the Planning Guide.
PHASE 7
Organize:
Visualizing your content - site map

Use the content groups you’ve created and create a site map that shows the **hierarchical relationship** of all the content on your site. The hierarchy of each page will be shown with a parent/child relationship. Not every page will have a child, but every page will have a parent.

Take care to **limit the number of top-level navigation items**, remembering to filter everything through the lens of your primary audience. While listing your most recent accreditation is important, for example, it intuitively fits in a section labeled “About Us” and does not warrant a slot in the top-level navigation.

The global group you created in the card sorting exercise can be represented on the site map as “unit footer.”
Contact Web Communications

Review:
• review site map

Preview:
• content outline

Questions?
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.
The outline view takes the same information represented in the site map and expresses it as an indented outline. This is a helpful format, particularly for the word-driven content person on your team, because it provides a great starting point that can be filled in with more and more detail as the content is being developed. Unlike the site maps and wireframes that will become artifacts that you won’t update after a certain point in the process, the outline often becomes a living document that serves as the go-to reference for content.
Contact Web Communications

Review:
• content outline

Preview:
• wireframes

Questions?
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.

Training Guide
The final book in the series, the Training Guide, will be used in hands-on training exercises for the content management system (CMS) conducted by UTS. This training will show the people responsible for building and managing a unit’s Web presence how to use the CMS to build the website they planned with the Planning Guide and visualized with the Style Guide.
Wireframes are blueprints of a page, a way to visualize the organization of content on a single page. For you, the work of creating the blueprints for page types has already been done. That allows you to take a kind of “paint-by-numbers” approach to wireframe your pages with the downloadable templates.

While your site map shows you the layout of the site and required content areas, your wireframes indicate page types and what content goes where on each page. What photo needs to appear as the header photo? What is the main content of the page? Is there a callout? What is the content for the callout? Wireframes will inform your site map, which you can update to show page types.

**Download Wireframe Templates**
Use these wireframe templates (as shown in the samples, right) to help you visualize what content and which content modules you will place on each page.

[sc.edu/toolbox/downloads/wireframe_templates.pdf](http://sc.edu/toolbox/downloads/wireframe_templates.pdf)
Contact Web Communications

Review:
• wireframes

Preview:
• content creation

Questions?
Jot down any questions your team would like to cover at the check-in.
PHASE 10
Create:
Assembling your content

You only have one small step left before you’re ready to do what you wanted to do before you started reading this document, build your website. That “small” step is to create the content for your site, that is to write, shoot, commission or otherwise acquire the text, images and files that will comprise your website.

This is where all the insights you’ve gained from the previous phases of the project get put into practice:

• The content inventory showed you what your starting point is with the content from your current site and who the subject matter experts are for each page.
• By looking at the Web analytics, you’ve learned why people visit your site and perhaps what content they really don’t care about.
• The heuristic evaluation showed that, even when the information is valid and current, there are ways to improve the way you present it.
• The guiding principles, content strategy exercise and information architecture phase have given you a clearly defined unique value proposition, a focused list of the measurable site goals, an understanding of who your audience really is and what their goals are as users, and a logical structure to match the site goals to the user goals.
• You also have the site map, content outline and wireframes you created in the information architecture phase to help you as you create your content.

exercise

Content Checklist
Keep these things in mind as you begin to put your content together:

• Does every piece of content fulfill a user need, meet a goal of your unit or have someone assigned to maintain it?
• Make things easy to find. Are you consistent?
• Make things easy to read. Is it clear? Were you concise?
• Do you have appropriate calls to action? If you want someone to contact you, invite them to do so.
• Are there complicated or multistep processes you’re communicating, like applying? Be sure to provide a brief direct explanation of the steps.
• Have you captured the content that has a specific shelf-life? If you mention dates, for instance, you should use the CMS to remind you that the content needs updating or removing.
• Does the content consistently reflect the brand voice?
• Does the content read and look professional?
• Is it easy to scan? Have you relied on subheads to break up the content and convey the main messages?
• Do you layer information so that it is easy to scan or read general information and easy to click down into more detailed information?
• Does the content have the appropriate tags? Have you tagged content items with meaningful tags to assist in searches?
That’s all there is to it! Now that all the hard work of learning about your audience and thinking about how to serve them is done, you can “begin” to build your site.

Remember that you are in a tough position as the person who is helping to lead up your area’s Web redesign effort. You are going to be asked to do things because a certain faculty member wants it, or because the dean likes it when his message is the most prominent item on the site. When that inevitable moment comes around, remember that there are two ways to make your internal stakeholders pleased with your website: One is to do exactly what they all ask you to do. The other is to build consensus among your stakeholders on who your important audiences are and what activities the site should support for those audiences. Then create a website that achieves those goals.

The first way is certainly easier, but it probably won’t meet the needs of your audience. The second way is hard, because everyone will have opinions on the best way to do things. But if everyone agrees on what the site should do and for whom, you can objectively measure how it performs.